Military ignores 'don't ask' policy

By **Mary Boyle**/The Gazette
Story editor Bill Vogrin; headline by Sherida Warner

WASHINGTON — Five years after the presidential executive order detailing the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, the armed services are doing a lot of asking, even when gay men and lesbians in uniform try to keep quiet.

Airman 1st Class Andre Taylor, for example, never volunteered any information about his sexual orientation. But that didn't stop the Air Force from discharging him in 1996 for being gay.

Taylor, now 28, was stationed at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii when another airman facing jail time for sexual assault identified him and 16 other members of the military as gay men or lesbians in exchange for a lighter sentence.

Within four months, Taylor was kicked out of the Air Force.

"My life has been entirely screwed over," he said in a telephone interview from his home in Florida.

Taylor's dismissal wasn't supposed to happen under the policy adopted in 1993 to address gay men and lesbians in the military.

Known as "don't ask, don't tell," the policy holds that homosexual conduct is bad for military morale, discipline and unit cohesion. Under the policy, homosexual conduct is taboo on and off military bases.

But the policy was designed to let gay soldiers continue to serve as long as they kept their sexuality to themselves.

It hasn't worked that way, though. The number of gay men and lesbians discharged from the armed services has increased every year since the policy was adopted.

Nearly 1,000 soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen were discharged for being gay in fiscal year 1997, a 17 percent increase over the prior year. In fact, it's the largest number since 1986.

See **MILITARY**/A20

Car Audio

CO. SPRINGS
1208 N. Circle Dr.
633-4003

NORTH CO. SPRINGS
5730 N. Academy
260-6789

PUEBLO
504 N. Grand
(719) 544-9407

LAMAR
307 N. Main
(719) 336-8128

0% interest until Mar. 1999. Ask Us!

UNBEATABLE "PRICE POLICY"

Bring Sunshine Audio any newspaper ad from any store in this city on any model stereo "In Stock", Sunshine won't match other stores' prices, we'll beat their deal on the identical model or we'll
GIVE YOU THE STEREO FREE!

WE WANT YOUR BUSINESS

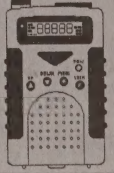
If Your Car Stereo Needs Repair, Sunshine Can FIX IT FAST!

SERVICE/REPAIR
636-3447

All Models Similar to Illustrations. Some clearance items, one each, as is. *Installed price includes Basic in-dash labor. Required parts extra. OFFERS EXPIRE 1-15-99

FM 2 WAY

NO AIRTIME FEES-EVER



- **No License Required**
- **2 Mile Range**
- **Works Inside the Mall**
- **Hunting • Fishing • Boating**

TWO FOR $89.99

PIONEER REBATES

	NOT	*NET AFTER REBATE
In-Dash Super Tuner AM/FM Auto-Reverse Cassette • 24 AM/FM Presets • 50 Watts	$129.95	**$99.98**
DEH-36 • AM/FM In-Dash CD • Detachable Face • 2 Year Warranty	$269.95	**$199.98**
DEH-46 • AM/FM In-Dash CD • Detachable Face • 2 Year Warranty • Disc Title Memory	$299.95	**$269.98**
DEH-P56 • AM/FM In-Dash CD • 40 Watts x4 • Theft Alarm • Disc Title Memory	$339.95	**$299.98**

AIDS infecting more Africans; bad condoms may be cause

The New York Times

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Out of the depths of the AIDS epidemic sweeping Africa, an ugly truth is emerging: Some condom makers have been dumping their substandard wares here and Africans have been risking their lives on brittle, leaky or ill-fitting condoms.

The problem has been particularly bad here in South Africa, where, until last August, government officials were using a procurement system that almost invited manufacturers to ship their castoffs here.

There is no question that a scarcity of condoms and the refusal of many men to use them are to blame for far more of Africa's 23 million HIV infections than faulty condoms are. And experts say most condoms are perfectly good and that the influx of bad ones may finally have been stemmed. But the deviousness or sloppiness of some manufacturers and the failure of inspectors to catch them have contributed to the disease's spread.

As a result, couples who do practice safe sex have been left helpless.

Elizabeth Chidonza, an AIDS-education worker in Cape Town, said she has twice had condoms break during sex. Her boyfriend is not infected with the AIDS virus, but she is. She is both afraid of infecting him and afraid he would beat her if she did.

Hundreds of millions of condoms are handed out for free on this continent each year, paid for — and tested — by international aid agencies.

Even now, though, more than 4 million Kenzo brand condoms from Polo Latex Co. of Calcutta are on their way back to India. They were not tested before distribution, and complaints from Cape Town prostitutes flooded in to SWEAT, the Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Task Force, a community aid agency, which had handed thousands out free.

When they were checked, the results were shocking: As many as 48 out of 200 in some test batches broke.

Plan to combat infectious disease 'superbugs' pushed

The New York Times

WASHINGTON — President Clinton will soon propose a $25 million initiative to combat the spread of infectious diseases, including virulent new strains of microbes that resist treatment by antibiotics and other drugs, administration officials said Saturday.

Public health officials have become alarmed about the emergence of such "superbugs" and more generally about the increasing incidence of infectious diseases once thought to be under control.

The extra money will be included in the budget request that Clinton sends to Congress early next year, administration officials said. It represents a 31 percent increase in the federal program to address emerging infectious diseases.

Dr. Jeffrey Koplan, the new director of the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the additional money would be used to investigate outbreaks of infectious diseases, to upgrade the laboratories of state and local health departments, to develop new diagnostic tests and to educate doctors and patients about the dangers from excessive use of antibiotics.

In addition, federal officials

wan
with
depa
Cen
four
near
heal
hour
"(
Kop
state
men
have
they
cour
have
e-ma
They
pape
depa
Su
diffi

track the spread of disease, identify the causes and take action, Koplan said.

By analyzing the genetic characteristics of certain bacteria, scientists can sometimes identify a common source, as they did recently with an outbreak of food poisoning from Listeria that killed four people and sickened 40.

Scientists can send the "genetic fingerprints" for such bacteria by Internet to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. Laboratory technicians there can compare the genetic data from different parts of the country, reaching conclusions with fewer cases than in the past.

But, Koplan said, "the whole system is only as strong as its weakest link, which unfortunately is often the county health departments."

The government also wants to beef up its network of doctors, hospitals and laboratories that report cases of infectious disease, so that outbreaks will be detected more rapidly.

Some of the new money would be used to investigate the growing threat posed by germs that are resistant to antibiotics. Sens. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and Bill Frist, R-Tenn., expressed

ONLY
DAYS L
EYEC
COME
Don't waste the holiday stressing. We'll have
got to visit
benefits expi
of glasses. Just bring in
Doctors of Optometry located next to Pearle
you've got to do this holiday season, put you
Pearle, Pearle Vi

Wa
Ye
and

ombat
s disease
gs' pushed

track the spread of disease, identify the causes and take action, Koplan said.

By analyzing the genetic characteristics of certain bacteria, scientists can sometimes identify a common source, as they did recently with an outbreak of food poisoning from Listeria that killed four people and sickened 40.

Scientists can send the "genetic fingerprints" for such bacteria by Internet to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. Laboratory technicians there can compare the genetic data from different parts of the country, reaching conclusions with fewer cases than in the past.

But, Koplan said, "the whole system is only as strong as its weakest link, which unfortunately is often the county health departments."

The government also wants to beef up its network of doctors, hospitals and laboratories that report cases of infectious disease, so that outbreaks will be detected more rapidly.

Some of the new money would be used to investigate the growing threat posed by germs that are resistant to antibiotics. Sens. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and Bill Frist, R-Tenn., expressed

Gazette 12/27/98

Military/Ex-cadet billed for $50,000

From A1

"The Pentagon is a no-show in enforcing the policy," said Dixon Osburn, a lawyer with the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, a Washington advocacy group for gay military members.

What's more, some gay men and lesbians say the military is aggressively punishing them years after they were forced or chose to resign from service academies.

Military investigators have sometimes pressured cadets in service academies to admit they are gay, forced them to drop out and then tried to make them repay tens of thousands of dollars in educational expenses.

That's the experience of Lisa Giddings, who was a junior at the Air Force Academy in 1989 when she reported her checkbook stolen. Investigators looking into the missing checkbook discovered she was a lesbian, according to Giddings and her lawyer.

Scared and devastated, she resigned from the academy and went home to Nebraska to finish college.

Seven years later, Giddings received a letter from the academy — her first piece of mail from the institution since the day she left.

Inside was a bill for $50,000 in tuition.

"My reaction was total shock and panic," Giddings said.

She is fighting the tuition bill, arguing the academy waited too long to bill her and denied her the opportunity to pay it off through service.

"I would love to have continued to go to school there and go into the Air Force," said Giddings, now 29 and pursuing her doctorate in economics at American University. "It was not by choice at all that I left."

Military investigators have sometimes pressured cadets in service academies to admit they are gay, forced them to drop out and then tried to make them repay tens of thousands of dollars in educational expenses.

Keeping quiet not enough

A recent Pentagon review of "don't ask, don't tell" found some commanders have sought out gay men and lesbians in their ranks even when they have done nothing to attract attention to their sexual orientation.

"Although we conclude that the department's policy on homosexual conduct is generally being implemented properly, a number of areas were identified in which the policy could be usefully clarified or implementation could be otherwise enhanced," said the report, released in April.

According to the report, up to 80 percent of those discharged were junior officers and enlisted personnel who voluntarily told their commanders or peers they were gay.

The Pentagon doesn't know why some members voluntarily disclose their sexual orientation. But the report speculated that because recruiters no longer inquire about sexual orientation under "don't ask, don't tell," gay men and lesbians may not be screened out before joining the military.

Charles Moskos, a military sociologist from Northwestern University who backed adoption of "don't ask, don't tell," suggests some heterosexuals who want to get out of the military may falsely claim to be gay to obtain a discharge.

"I have no data to support that," Moskos said. "But I think people are seeing it as an easy way to get discharged. Too many people are just telling on their own free will."

Women most often targeted

Department of Defense statistics also show women are being discharged for homosexuality at a greater rate than men.

Women made up about 13 percent of the military in fiscal year 1996 but accounted for 29 percent of homosexual conduct discharges.

In 1997, approximately 14 percent of military personnel were women, but 22 percent of the people discharged for homosexuality were women.

The Pentagon couldn't explain the gender difference. The report rejects the argument women are sometimes accused of being lesbian in retaliation for reporting sexual harassment or other misconduct.

"We found very few specific incidents" to support such a theory, the report said.

The Pentagon recommended several changes to better enforce the policy, including one in direct response to Taylor's case.

The report said pre-trial agreements, such as the one that resulted in the dismissal of Taylor, the airman based in Hawaii, should not be used to obtain information on consensual sexual conduct.

The report also recommended a commander starting an investigation into alleged homosexual conduct first consult with military legal officials; and that the policy should make clear it is unacceptable to harass service members based on their alleged or presumed sexuality.

Progress is slow

Osburn, the advocacy group lawyer, called it a "good sign" the Pentagon was willing to review the policy after five years.

He said he detects a slightly growing tolerance, particularly among the youngest service members, for gay men and lesbians in the military.

"But what has to happen next is the Pentagon must be willing to follow its own rules," he said.

Moskos, the military sociologist, also believes gay men and lesbians are gaining some acceptance within the ranks. He has taken numerous polls on service members' attitudes toward homosexuality in the military.

"There's less stigma (among men) than there was five or six years ago, and even less stigma among women," Moskos said.

But change is slow, and not everyone agrees it should happen.

Federal courts have heard nearly a dozen challenges to the policy and generally have sided with the military, ruling "don't ask, don't tell" does not violate the Constitution.

Congress has no appetite to revisit the issue anytime soon.

U.S. Rep. Joel Hefley, a Colorado Springs Republican, is among conservative lawmakers who opposed the policy in 1993. He continues to believe gay men and lesbians have no place in the armed services.

"The military is built around close camaraderie," Hefley said. "If someone is gay, any way you cut it, they're in a small minority. Any time you're in that small minority as a group, it's setting you apart from others, making you different and there's going to be problems involved," he said.

Hefley said the military should not be forced by Congress or anyone else to divert its attention from key readiness issues.

"We're using the military for social experimentation, when it should be designed to win wars," Hefley said.

Mary Boyle covers the federal government and may be reached at (202) 638-7473 or maryb@gazette.com